The HOME-MADE KINDERGARTEN

Nora A. Smith

The Riverside Press Cambridge

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I. FROEBEL'S GIFTS.
II. FROEBEL'S OCCUPATIONS.
III. KINDERGARTEN PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE.

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THE HOME-MADE KINDERGARTEN

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BY NORA ARCHIBALD SMITH

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THE HOME-MADE KINDERGARTEN

I

INTRODUCTION

You ask me, thoughtful mothers, — on the rolling prairie, the far-off rancho, the rocky island; in the lonely lighthouse, the frontier settlement, the high-perched mining-camp, — you ask me how you, who have few or none of the advantages that modern civilization can give, may yet have one of its greatest — the kindergarten for your children.

And I answer that since the kindergarten is not, like the Holy Sepulchre, a well-defined spot, within certain geographical limits, to which all true believers must repair; since it is not absolutely dependent upon the ministrations

of a priestess versed in the faith; since its virtue does not wholly lie in the specially devised balls and blocks and sticks and papers which it uses; since, finally, it is a philosophy, not a system of object-teaching, its essentials may be learned by any one of hearing ear and understanding heart.

Those who think of the kindergarten merely as a suitable means of instruction for children between three and six years forget that its creator, Friedrich Froebel, laid great stress upon infant education, and called upon mothers everywhere to begin their half-playful, half-earnest training with the baby in the cradle. In the mother, far removed from the inspiration and companionship of other mothers, out of the reach of schools, deprived of the aid of nurses and governesses, dependent upon herself alone, her instincts, her hopes, and her ideals in the education of her children, he would

have felt the greatest interest; to her he would have extended his warmest sympathy, and would have claimed, I believe, that what is highest and best in the kindergarten could well be brought to and practiced by her. After all, the best teacher is he who gives not things but thoughts, not facts but ideas, not rules of conduct but ideals, — for it is the "spirit communicated" which is "a perpetual possession."

If once we understand on what unchanged and unchanging laws of child-nature Froebel founded his philosophy of education, we can endeavor to apply them to our own conditions and to carry them out with such materials as we have at hand.

Let us see, then, what are the foundation stones on which the kindergarten is builded. To state them briefly and simply, they are: —

Education should begin at birth.

It should be carried on by means of the objects and playthings which surround the child, and with which nature so liberally provides him, and should present these as a kind of alphabet with which, by and by, he may spell out the world.

It should be threefold, addressing itself to body, mind, and soul.

It should lead, even in the smallest things, to expression of the child's real self, of his own individuality; and from imitation and the following of suggestion, should proceed to invention or creation.

It should bring the child, at last, to a reverent appreciation of nature and a wholesome interest in everything that grows and blooms and moves and breathes and shines, or stands unchanging, like the rocks and hills.

It should also equip him with the ability to work with and comprehend his fel-

lows, to understand the value of coöperation; and here comes in one drawback for the lonely mother, for she cannot, alas! supply her child with the companionship of other little people of suitable age. She can give him her own, whenever it is possible, and plan that his father, no matter how busy he may be, shall grant an hour now and then; but the society of persons of another age and other interests, no matter how childlike in spirit they may be, is obviously not the same as that of one's fellows; and while it offers some advantages, renders others impossible. As an only child, however, even in America, is more or less rare, let us hope that the work and play, both indoors and out, which this series of papers is to consider, may be shared by two or three children, at least.

The papers will not be concerned, primarily, with the objects known as the Gifts and Occupations which Froebel

devised for the kindergarten. These may not be accessible to women who are out of the reach of shops, schools, teachers and educational publishers; and they also depend for their value largely upon the way in which they are used, upon the suggestion and inspiration of a kindergartner whose professional training renders or should render her capable of doing work which is out of the question for a busy mother, had she as many heads as a hydra and as many hands as Briareus himself.

It is to be remembered, however, that these Gifts and Occupations were, after all, wrought out by Froebel from a careful observation of the playing child; that they are largely based upon the traditional employments of childhood and the race; and that their materials, for the most part, are such as are to be found in every household, their novelty and great value lying chiefly in the ideas

upon which they are based. They are, then, briefly: worsted balls of the six primary colors (red, yellow, blue, green, orange, violet); next, wooden spheres, cubes, and cylinders made to revolve on their different axes, showing other geometrical forms whirling within; then, variously divided wooden cubes for building; then, pasteboard and wooden tablets in geometrical forms; and finally, wooden sticks, metal rings, and seeds of various kinds for laying pictures and designs upon the table. These are the Gifts (so-called); the Occupations being perforating or pricking, sewing, drawing and painting, weaving, cutting and folding of paper, and modeling in sand and clay. By their use the child gains a thorough practical knowledge of color, form, position, and direction; he learns much of simple geometry (plane and solid), and of the foundation processes of arithmetic; he becomes more or less

expert in the use of his hands, in combination of colors and materials, in drawing and designing; and by dint of all these things begins to know himself, and to show to others something of his own individuality, of his particular worth and value as a human being.

This is by no means all of the kindergarten, nor is it the most valuable part, in my opinion. Gardening, the care of animals, songs, games and music, cooperative work, story-telling in prose and poetry, religious training, — all these have their place in this marvelous system of child education, upon which volumes have been and are daily being written. You see, however, that in the kindergarten playthings and work materials, as such, no particular value lies; it is the way in which they are used, the ideas on which they are based that makes them worthy of reverent consideration.

There is no household, howsoever bare and ill-equipped, which this little book will enter, but has materials for sewing, paper for cutting and folding and drawing and painting, pasteboard for cutting into varied forms, sand, clay, wax, or putty for modeling, balls for tossing and bouncing and swinging, wood for block-building and stick-laying, and beans, coffee-berries or lentils for outlining pictures, and designing, and be assured, if these things, and many others which I shall suggest, are used in the kindergarten spirit and with regard to the principles already outlined, their value will be very great, although they do not of themselves make a kindergarten.

Best of all, no man or woman will even attempt to read this booklet who has not something, however undeveloped, of the seeing eye and understanding heart, who is not to some extent interested in

the early training of little children, and with real interest in any subject and an equal desire to succeed, the key-word which opens the magic door of the treasure-chamber is easily found.

We should remember in the beginning that all the occupations we are to discuss will necessitate at first frequent help and suggestion from the parent or older playmate, but that — *and this is an absolute test of our success as teachers* — this help should be needed less frequently as time goes on, and by and by should seldom be required at all.

It is also to be remembered that it is of little use to suggest one definite thing which children may do, on the completion of which they will run to us for another hint, but that we should rather try to give them ideas which can be gradually and progressively worked out.

We must count in the beginning, too, on a certain fickleness in children, —

that is, that their interest will not be long centred on any one thing or employment. To desert it temporarily, however, is not to desert it altogether; and when they tire for the time of balls or blocks or drawing or modeling, the despised materials may be put away and will be eagerly sought for on another occasion.

We should see to it also that the permanent products of the children's work, their sketches, foldings, cuttings, their modeled figures, their collections of whatever kind, be not treated carelessly either by them or by us, be not destroyed or ruthlessly "cleared up," but set in some given spot and used for some definite purpose. To this end it is well to accustom children to criticize their work and to be willing to keep only that which is really successful, according to their powers.

One of the inalienable rights of children, most frequently disregarded, is that

they have no recognized spot where they can keep their own possessions. True, they have a special bed, a certain seat at table, drawers and closets where their clothing is kept; but all these things are but externals, things with which grown people are chiefly concerned. They need a case for their own books, a box for their own toys, a shelf for their own collections, books for their stamps and post-cards, a place for their own work; and to grant these things is not only to make them careful and responsible and orderly, but to satisfy their desire for possession, and by satisfying it, make them the more willing to be generous. It is not by depriving man of goods that we teach him to share them with others, but by bestowing them in fullest measure and letting him learn in their use that they are never so fully his own as when he can lend and give them. "Unless," as an unknown somebody has

wisely said, — "unless there is sympathy in pleasures and employments; unless there is full recognition of a child's right to freedom, to space, to ownership, to exercise the right of hospitality, the rift in the lute appears and discord begins to be heard in the household where God meant there should be perfect harmony."

Here are a good many preliminary thoughts, perhaps, before beginning on the practical suggestions for employment which the busy mother is anxiously awaiting; but no suggestions are of any value unless carried out according to certain immutable educational laws; for if you do not thoroughly understand the rule by which a given problem is worked out you are left helplessly confronting other similar problems which may come up at any moment. The clock will tick only once or twice each time, no matter how often you shake it; but if you know

how to wind it up, it will go cheerfully on for long hours while you occupy yourself with something else. The proof, then, of whether or not we know how to wind these little human clocks will lie in their behavior, and that we must watch while they are intent upon that play which is the proper business of childhood.

II

OUTDOOR WORK AND PLAY

THE mother whose lines have fallen outside the wilderness of brick and stone we call a town is, after all, rather to be envied than pitied, for the little child who can have free run of nature's garden has absolutely all that he needs for education. "One day we shall believe," says a great German teacher, "that all we truly know — the stuff of all real knowledge — we learn from her; all the rest is but hearsay, rote-knowledge."

Let the little one, then, begin his lessons as early as may be, — begin to feel and see and touch and listen and love and wonder. A baby in a grass-plot or a sand-heap, with only a dog for company, — or with no company at all, for that

matter, — will roll placidly about, or sit in contemplation twice as long as he would in the dull and unchanging house, for the scene is ever new in nature's garden. The older children should first make thorough acquaintance with the familiar features of the ground about them as a preliminary to the study of book geography, — with the hills or mountains, the valleys and plains, the watercourses, the ponds and lakes, the coast-line and cliffs; and these may profitably be reproduced in the sand-pile, and later given permanent form in rude maps. At night the stars may be studied in a simple way, for even an ordinary dictionary gives some information in regard to the names and characteristics of the heavenly bodies and adds an explanation of these names and their mythological derivation.

One of the best means of interesting children in the changing seasons, the

varying weather and the life about them, is to have a family "year-book" or "calendar," which may either be a stout blank-book, an old ledger, or a sufficient number of leaves of smooth brown paper stitched together. To this all the children may contribute, the one who has attained the dignity of scribe setting down the day, month, and year at the head of each page, and perhaps ruling off the divisions in which the facts are to be recorded. The title of this volume may perhaps be

Year-book of the Johnson Family

and on January 1, 1912, would be entered under "Weather" a yellow circle, which the baby might paste on, or draw with crayon, indicating sunshine and bright skies. A gray circle might be used for a day of cloud or fog and a black one indicate storms, while gilt paper pasted in the proper place would show the evening star and the changing moon. An

examination of the thermometer will give the temperature at breakfast and supper-time each day, and no infant scientist but would delight in setting an old tin pan in an open space, — protecting it from the thirst of roaming animals, — and measuring the rainfall, for record in the famous book.

From noting rain, sunshine, snow, frost, and the direction of the wind, we pass to living things, and record the birds seen each day and the fish and wild animals also, if we are so happy as to be able to espy them. At last, as the weeks go on, some one is so fortunate as to be the earliest to chronicle the first patch of bare ground, the first pussy willow, the first robin, or the first dandelion.

These year-books, which would naturally be varied to suit the home-scene of each family, are at first exceedingly simple, but later, as the children learn to use their eyes and are more skillful

in the use of their hands, may contain pressed leaves and flowers, or pictures of them, a feather dropped from a migrating bird, perhaps, or the sketch of a snow crystal.

If the mother begins these year-books wisely with the little people, they will in time be carried on without assistance, and she will see with delight as the months go by that her children are cultivating those powers of observation on which all learning rests.

A certain father of my acquaintance has devised for himself an admirable method both of cultivating the power of observation in his children and of keeping tally of the growth of that power. Once a week or so, he takes a long walk with the little people and carries a note-book in which he jots down at their dictation every living thing seen by each child on the excursion. The game is called "Sharp Eyes," and the winner,

whom not even an ant has escaped, has good reason to be triumphant. Such a game is of especial value to the dreamy, unobservant child, and would be useful to many a grown person.

Half-grown boys and girls, too, would be delighted to play at "Scouting," it being understood that a scout is always a special person, selected for his special qualifications, and that he is supposed to be unusually active, intelligent, and trustworthy. The commanding officer, peacefully seated under a tree meanwhile, sends out such a child scout to bring him a full report of the country up to a given point, stating the condition of the roads, fences, and bridges; giving a description of the rocks or trees behind which the enemy might take shelter; noting the presence of any figures in the distance, — dust rising or birds flying, — the foot-marks, wheel-marks, hoof-prints in the road, etc., etc., or the presence of

any object by the wayside which would indicate that the foe had passed by.

If it is explained that the expedition is a dangerous one, necessitating great care and discretion on the part of the recruit, and if it is suggested that it will perhaps be well to make certain marks to guard against losing his way on return, by breaking small branches, piling up stones, "blazing" trees, scratching fence-posts, etc., the excitement will be great and the game delightful, as well as preëminently useful.

When walks and excursions are not in order, gardening is always to be done in the proper season; and here one might suggest that it is best to carry on some little supervision of the children's outdoor work and play, and not to allow them to do any one thing so long and with such ardor that they become thoroughly wearied. An occupation to be really enjoyed by children should be

taken up for brief periods only, according to age; and for this reason it is wise to plan their days carefully, to allot one hour for rest, one for active play, and another for some quiet occupation, always reserving the period just before bedtime, if possible, for a talk with mother and a sharing with her of all the day's experiences.

As to gardening, it goes without saying that every child should have a plot of his own, where he can raise the hardier flowers and vegetables separately, or in wild confusion, according to his fancy. Froebel has many wise things to say on the value to children of working in the ground, and of learning, at first hand, the lessons that the plant world is ever ready to teach; and this is one essential of the kindergarten, often denied to city prisoners, which the mothers whose needs we are considering can easily give their children. If there are

older boys in the family they can make garden tools for the babies; a fairly satisfactory hoe blade being developed from a tin cracker box, and the essential part of a rake from a stick, with a row of nails driven in. The larger children must have tools of their own, or old ones cut down; and it is wonderful to see the pleasure they will take in clearing the ground of weeds, removing rubbish, and digging up the soil. Each child must decide what he shall put in his own plot, and be responsible for it, else there will be no development of individuality; but it is well also to have a "group-bed," to which all may contribute. Advice will be needed from older persons as to the suitability of the soil to the proposed products, and very likely father will have to give a more thorough digging and decide on what fertilizers are needed. It is well to lead the children, at first, to flowers and vegetables of strong and courageous

habit, which insist upon coming up in spite of all difficulties, such as scarlet runners, sunflowers, lettuce, and radishes. No little child becomes a gardener in the face of too great difficulties, and he requires to see the fruit of his labors in a fairly brief time to gain courage to go on. A garden gives some occupation for every day throughout the season, for when there is no digging, making of beds, or planting, there is weeding, watering, training, and finally the collecting of seeds in packets, labeling and storing them for next year. It is to be remembered here that a garden ill-prepared, ill-planted, ill-kept, neglected, is a thousand times worse than no garden at all; we must have parental supervision in this, as in everything; for the child is only a learner and a very little one, and must begin in time to spell out the lesson that

"Tasks in hours of insight willed
Must be in hours of gloom fulfilled."

Not only in planting will the child take pleasure, but in transplanting. On some of his walks he will delight to take a basket, and bring home a fern, a wayside lily, a root of goldenrod, or woodbine, and, under advice, select the proper spot for it, set it out, and tend it. Such a wild garden in time becomes a delight to the family, and a delight attended with no expenses and no drawbacks.

Then there is the gathering and pressing of the leaves and wild flowers of the neighborhood to make a collection. A press may be made of two pieces of smooth board, eight by twelve inches in size, and perhaps half an inch in thickness, to the middle of each side of which is tacked a piece of leather through which a strap is passed. This may be buckled tight to hold the specimens properly and the end left long enough to go over the shoulder and buckle again,

carrying the press like a knapsack. Each small botanist must have his own press, which he can make himself, for wood is plenty everywhere, and leather in the form of old shoes, at least, can always be cut into strips and sewed for straps. Each botanist goes on his walks, of course, with a number of sheets of white wrapping-paper, or soft brown paper cut to the proper size, in his press; for the specimens must not be taken from the page on reaching home, but labeled with the familiar name, the date, and where found, and transferred to another press or an old book. Each child may have his own "leaf-book" or "flower-book" of the district, or all combine in making one, as seems best.

Children have a passion for collecting, which is of the greatest possible service as an occupation and an equal source of annoyance to the family, *unless* they are provided with a proper place to keep

their specimens. If the mother will once show them how to make paper boxes or remodel pasteboard ones for shells, pebbles, seeds, and nuts, how to arrange rude shelves for rocks, presses for leaves, flowers, and sea-moss, etc., and set apart a certain room or certain cupboards where these specimens may be safely kept, displayed, and admired, she will by a few hours' work arrange for herself in the future long intervals of leisure for something else.

Desirable objects to collect, either for pure joy in beauty or for future use, are leaves, flowers, ferns, shells, burrs, sea-moss, seeds of every possible size and kind, acorn-cups, small stones and bright pebbles, twigs, haws, thorn-apples, nests (last season's, of course), nuts, pods, maple-wings, cones, straws and reeds that can be cut in pieces, and if there be anything else "collectable" in the district, and not protected by the laws of

property, by all means let it be gathered in, for sooner or later it will be hailed with delight as a fascinating adjunct to play.

The children of a certain village in New York were encouraged one autumn to gather seeds and divide them into classes as indicated by the means of travel that nature had provided. Some seeds, for instance, travel by means of a balloon; others catch on to passing objects, clothing, hair of animals, like tramps upon a passing freight train; and some have rudders to guide them through the air. One of the boys felt himself a profound investigator when he discovered the advantage that some seeds have because they can float and take a ride on the water. Two men were heard by them discussing the wonderful vitality of weed seeds found in soil taken from a well twelve feet deep, asserting that after the clay from the bottom had re-

mained exposed to the action of weather for a year or so, the growth of a few weeds followed. The children of this village, after their investigations, were able to tell the men very promptly where the seeds of the weeds came from.

It is to be understood, however, that live things, as snails, beetles, grasshoppers, butterflies, moths, angleworms, toads, and frogs, are not to be "collected" and brought home unless under exceptional conditions and to accommodations previously arranged. Nor should we ever allow a child to collect anything merely to throw it away. If he does not wish to store it properly for future use, or to give it away, he must not touch it at all; and it must be early understood that the best way to admire a flower, if one does not need a specimen, is to sit down and watch it as it grows, and that to pluck it up by the roots is to exterminate it altogether.

If the day is very warm and one wishes to suggest a quiet play, the making of flower necklaces is especially charming to children; and if coarse needles and thread be provided they will busy themselves the entire morning with stringing clover-heads, bittersweet, lilacs, or daisies, or in making dandelion curls and chains with which they can proudly decorate themselves and their parents. Teaching them to make wreaths and garlands, too, of leaves and flowers, is useful and delightful; and so is the making of dolls out of poppy seed-cups or round-headed radishes set on a stick and dressed in leaves tied about the waist with grasses. If once the suggestion is given, the children develop great skill in fashioning dolls from seeds, flowers, and vegetables, — even from corn-cobs dressed in husks, the silk cleverly arranged for hair, — and when such a company sits down to a rustic feast of

hollyhock cheeses set on acorn plates, the joy is great indeed.

Playing in the water is a natural delight of children, which is granted them all too seldom, owing not so much to fear on the part of the mother for their bodily welfare as to anxiety about clothes and shoes. Here a shallow friendly brook, which is better for a child than all the books that ever were written, or a gentle sandy beach with a happy sea basking before it, are ideal places for play; and if we allow bare feet and one short garment, be it woolen frock or trousers, the water-sprite may splash to his heart's content. Sailing boats — home-made, of course — is a joy under such circumstances, for they can always be run after and caught when necessary, with no fear of wet feet. Such craft should by all means be hand-made, developing from a chip, with a paper sail pinned around a stick, to a real boat hewn out with a jack-knife.

The child who lives with domestic animals about him — cats, dogs, fowl, rabbits, doves, bees, cows, oxen, sheep, and horses — has another essential of life on which Froebel insisted. He bids the mother take her child to see the pigeons, the lambs, the hen with her chickens, and begin to appreciate mother-love and care, and he also advises that children assume responsibility for some animal and see for themselves that it is fed, watered, and protected. When we begin to play the part of Providence to any creature, he says, we feel insensibly our own dependence upon our Creator, and so is born the feeling of reverence, — as necessary to the child as dew to the flower.

The country child has, too, an opportunity to study toads and frogs, ants, spiders, lizards, newts, snails, bats, and earthworms, or starfish, sea anemones, crayfish, and crabs, under their natural

conditions and without injury to them. So he learns to value and appreciate them; he learns to see and hear; everything interests him and awakes in him eager thought and feeling; so the love of nature is planted deep and grows like the swelling seeds.

No matter where he lives, too, even on a rocky islet in a bleak sea, he can begin to know and love the birds, and thus not only gain present pleasure, but provide a delight for his maturity and old age. He should be taught to clear a place of snow in winter and scatter crumbs and seeds there every morning; he should fasten a piece of suet to a tree and watch the delight of the meat eaters among the feathered flock; in summer he may learn to make bird-houses, even a tin can nailed to a tree, the top bent down for a doorstep, being a shelter not to be despised. With these little attentions to their comfort the birds will mul-

tiply, and not only increase the joys of summer, but by their destruction of insect life, sensibly add to comfort and prosperity.

When we wish the children to play near the house we shall find that a pile of large blocks and sticks of wood is very useful and absorbing, sticks from the wood-pile, of course, being too short and irregular for proper edifices. The babies take great pleasure in sticks two feet long and two inches thick, perhaps, and seem to delight in carrying them about from one place to another, either in their arms, or in little carts. Older children need larger materials; and if by any means they can make a "house" large enough to get into, the pleasure is intense and never-to-be-forgotten.

Children should be provided with real tools, too, as soon as may be, and make their own boxes, boats, bird-houses, and what-not. No doubt the use of tools is

attended with some danger, but the boys, at least, are certain to get hold of them sooner or later, and their own implements are likely to be more suitable in size and less keen-edged than their father's, — less keen-edged than his temper, too, when he finds out what his precious set has been used for.

There is no better way for the busy mother to provide time for her other duties than to have a load of sand brought to her outdoor premises and fenced about with a plank or two to prevent scattering. If but one plaything could be provided for a family of children, a sand-pile would be the one above all others which the wise mother would select. Here, even the baby will be perfectly safe and happy, rolling about at first like a frolicsome puppy and later covering and uncovering his hands and patting out pies and cakes. He will dig for hours in such a sand-pile if a rough,

home-made shovel and tin pail be provided. In the sand, too, the older children may model their geography lessons, reproduce the features of the neighborhood, and for coöperative work lay out farms, perhaps, surrounded by wooded hills, lakes (bits of looking-glass) with swans floating on them, construct bridges, the various farm-buildings, folds and pens for cattle and sheep, and, by the aid of the whole family, even the neighboring settlement and village church.

In the writer's experience no childish pleasure compared with that of "playing house," and that it is a universal human joy needs no argument to prove. A wooden box set in the garden with a shelf driven in, to provide an upper chamber, is all that is needed at first, and bits of broken dishes, blocks, and stones are easily transformed into the needed furniture. Burrs can be made into thick rugs for the cottage, into hats

for the corn-cob dolls, or baskets and trays for them to carry. The stronger grasses can be woven into carpets, and portières and curtains may be strung from corn, bright-colored beans, shells, straws, and pease, or other materials to be had for the picking-up.

If one lives near the woods, a two-story house of pine boughs is easily made, setting up four uprights, tying miniature beams across, making the walls of thick branches, cutting out windows and doors from the green, and making furniture of twigs and tiny cones fastened with pins. Larger cones form the inmates, with hastily arranged costumes of scraps from the workbag; and the residence, when completed, is as exquisite in color as the most æsthetic doll could desire.

More ambitious houses are sometimes constructed of old wooden boxes, to which pebbles or sand are glued to imitate stone. Shingles make suitable roofs,

which may be colored with home-made dyes. Cracker tins, cut with tinsmith's scissors, make admirable roofs and partitions also, and spools strung on sticks are most effective for columns and pillars. Corrugated paper, such as is wrapped around bottles, gives a finely Oriental effect when bent and curved for roofs of piazzas and summer-houses, while mosaic floors laid in patterns with shells, pebbles, or seeds are most effective. Children have been known to make very pretty furniture out of the button balls of the sweet gum tree stuck together; out of clay, spools, chestnuts, and pins and wool; and have even carved sofas and bedsteads from squashes and pumpkins. When such a house is surrounded with flourishing groves, well-laid-out flower-beds, and pebble paths, when boats of peapods or pine bark sail on its waters, when cottonwool lambs with pin legs sport in its meadows, when

a walnut-shell lady sits in the window with a radish infant in her arms, then, indeed, the heart of the proud proprietor swells well-nigh to bursting with joy.

III

INDOOR WORK AND PLAY

When we come to consider the subject of indoor work and play, we see at once that one prolific source of difficulty with children lies in lack of room and facilities for the kinds of employment which are particularly beneficial and delightful to them. Here, the mother who is pent in the small town house or flat, without adequate room for herself and her husband, without a garden spot, without an attic, without any one place which she can use as overflow for herself and her possessions, has good cause to envy her lonely sister on the ranch, or in the mining-camp. There are few mothers living where space is not sold in inches, and valued accordingly, who cannot pro-

vide a real playroom for their children, or cannot knock up a rude substitute, and having that, the battle is half won. The room should be large, if several children are to share it, and the barer the better. A cork or hemp rug for the floor that will deaden sound a little and provide warmth, yet can be taken up and thoroughly cleansed, a hammock or an old couch with a washable cover, a few low chairs, stools, and tables suitable for Lilliputian legs, and that is all. If the handy father will fashion a rough cupboard for each child, or arrange shelves for each, with curtains, or even nail packing-boxes to the floor, with the covers securely fastened in as shelves, the happy possessors of the room will not envy even the infant Prince of the Asturias. And why should they? What does any reasonable human being want more than light and space, warmth and air, a place to store his few possessions,

and room enough to work out his ideas? Even the baby, if set on the floor and given a creeping-rug to keep off drafts, or set in a padded packing-box, will be quite amused and happy in watching the activity of his elders, especially if an old tin pan and spoon, or other engine of delightful racket be provided. Children would not be so intolerably noisy and nerve-destroying, as they frequently are, if they had a suitable place in which to let off their superfluous energies; and it should be considered their right to turn their playroom at a moment's notice into an Indian village, a circus ring, or a field of battle. A narrow strip of board set at the bottom of each window, on which the lower sash may rest, gives the amount of ventilation necessary if we are to have good and happy children; and the means of warming the room in winter must be left for individual judgment and the special conditions of each

home. An open fire is, of course, the best method of heating; but this must be thoroughly screened, and stoves or steampipes provided with guards, if the mother is to have a moment's peace in absence. A screen to cover a fireplace is easily made out of wire netting and a stove guard from a sheet of tin; and fortunately the American father is commonly a Jack-of-all-trades, and is at his best when making something out of nothing. Such a playroom needs only a moderate degree of heat, however,—just enough to take the chill off, for the children are seldom quiet in it and are supplying their own warmth.

A prism hung in the window to make "light-birds" on the wall is always a joy to the children, and one of the oddest and prettiest effects in the world is obtained by hanging or fastening to the window-pane a plate of glass which has been made into what is technically known as a grat-

ing. This is produced by scratching upon the surface thousands of fine lines parallel and almost touching. When the light falls upon it, it is refracted and broken into its elements so as to throw rainbow halos and splendors in every direction. If hung in the direct sunlight, the blaze of color is almost too brilliant for comfort. Varied effects are obtained by intersecting one set of parallel lines with another set at right angles, or with two sets of groups running at different oblique angles. The most expensive, and perhaps the most exquisite, are those where the lines are concentric circles or are engraved by a geometric lathe.

It is understood that each child is to have a place for his own toys and his own collections in this playroom; that he is responsible for this place, whatever it may be, and absolutely obliged, on pain of losing it altogether, to put it in as good order as comes within his powers before

he leaves it at night. A room, such as has been described, must never be left in the mad confusion which frequently characterizes it by day, and still less should the mother set it in order herself, which indeed is one of the most pernicious of all practices.

If a low blackboard running along one side of the room, with a shelf for chalk and brushes, be made with a preparation of silicate directly upon the wall, or a wooden one fastened firmly there, this will be a great resource to be used in common by the children. The picture- and story-books, too, must be on low shelves and used in common, for they form in reality a kind of circulating library.

There should also be a mother's cupboard or closet in the playroom containing special playthings for great occasions, such as birthdays, holidays, days of convalescence or incipient invalidism, days

when the wind is in the east, everybody's temper short, and hands likely to be raised against neighbors. To this retreat toys unappreciated or maltreated must be returned till a better mind comes to their owners, work neglected and left lying about must retire for a season, and any special article, become a bone of contention, withdrawn till its common owners agree to share it in peace. Here, too, the mother will keep her stores of pencils, black and colored; her sheets of white and brown wrapping-paper, cut in suitable sizes and pressed smooth; her pasteboard, buttons, spools, chalks, tin, cardboard, and wooden boxes; her ends of string, tinfoil, picture-magazines, catalogues, — anything and everything, in fact, which will serve as fuel for the great play-engine. It would be delightful, too, if a drawer in the closet could be devoted to objects and old finery suitable for tableaux and dramatizations, such as

trappings for soldiers, feathered hats, trained skirts, buckled belts, gold lace, and old jewelry. Mother's closet is, of course, never to be opened in her absence or without her consent, and should be treated in general as a high, exalted place with which no liberties are taken.

An old German toymaker, when asked where he got the ideas for his playthings, once answered, with a half-smile, — "Not from the children, anyway. Children seldom get the toys they want, but those that their parents want them to want." Let us recall this saying when selecting playthings for the children and remember that ready-made toys, which are almost entirely excluded from the kindergarten, should be nearly so from the home. Their influence is of little value to children, like that of ready-made truths and opinions for adults, in matters of which they ought to be enabled to judge for themselves. The best use

children make of toys is to break them, in order to examine how they are made, what they are composed of, and to refashion them according to their own taste. Something ready-made is, however, necessary — only it should be simple, and not too plentiful. The kindergarten materials provide for this, at the same time making the hands of the little ones skillful, showing how much more their minds are intent on constructing than on breaking things.

It is most interesting, and shows the need children feel for large toys, to see their joy in playing with washboilers, coal-hods, wastebaskets, stoves, chairs, and various other domestic articles apparently quite unsuited to their size and requirements. We commonly take them away from the baby, under the impression, not even dispelled by his wails, that he does not know what he wants, and present him instead with a

rubber cat that squeaks, or an ivory rattle hung with bells. The possibilities of these small and uninteresting articles are soon exhausted, and baby wails afresh for that big and satisfactory waste-basket that could be handled, tumbled about, inverted on his head, and even crawled into.

Psychologists are telling us now that the larger motor activities, those of the arm and forearm, are developed before the smaller ones of the hand and fingers, and some of the kindergarten materials are being increased in size to meet the child's need in this respect. Let us remember the new knowledge and try to select playthings in accordance with it. With a little guidance children soon learn to handle simple tools, as hammers, saws, files, and augers, without any more chance of injury than comes with the use of any interesting plaything; and a restless child of four years will long be

amused and happy if allowed to drive plain or brass-headed tacks into a board according to a simple pattern. The play-room may well be provided, as the children grow older, with a small carpenter's bench, a set of tools, nails of various sizes, a bundle of laths, and some soft pine; and girls as well as boys will use them all and invite their companions to share in their joy. All children delight in materials for household employments: toy brooms, dusters, shovels, wash-boards, market baskets, watering-pots, scrubbing-brushes, flatirons, and can frequently be of real service in using them.

Children of both sexes should early be taught to help in the housework, indoors and out, as far as their strength allows; for this is one of the great benefits of rural training, now almost banished from the city home, with its gas stoves, its steam heat and electric lights, its bakeries and laundries at the doors, with everything

in fact so ready-made and systematized that nothing is left for eager, restless little hands and feet to do save to get into mischief. Let the children, then, in the country homes pick up chips and bring in kindling, dry dishes, set tables, sprinkle clothes, fold simple articles and iron them; let them even help in cooking, if mother's time and patience will hold out.

Turning from domestic employments to those more distinctively in the kindergarten line, let us first consider what the child in the playroom or by the mother's side can do with paper. Tearing is one of the employments earliest enjoyed, and one that will long keep a baby amused and happy. He may tear old newspapers in bits till he sits surrounded by the drift, which can finally be swept up into baskets for kindling fires, or used for stuffing a cushion for the cat or dog. Later, he learns to tear long strips, which

can be converted by the older children into fly-brooms, or fastened to screen doors to keep out insects; and later still, with plain brown or white paper, preferably, he can tear the rude outline of household objects, perhaps even animals by and by.

Then there are paper chains, which, with a cup of paste and a thin flat stick as brush, he will delight to put together, reveling not only in the combinations of color but in the sticky fingers. The mother or older child must first cut the strips for pasting, making them about five inches long and an inch wide, at first. The paper — colored, if possible; if not, white, brown, or both white and brown — should be ruled and cut accurately, else the chains will be no pleasure to the eye when finished. They make pretty decorations for Christmas trees, for the playroom, if not left up too long and allowed to get dusty, and may even serve

as barbaric decorations for the person. Older children enjoy making chains also, using narrower and shorter links and more elaborate combinations of color.

The ordinary paper squares used for folding in the kindergarten are four by four inches in size, but it is quite as well to have them considerably larger than this for home use. If colored paper is not to be had, ordinary wrapping-paper, *accurately cut and cut to measure*, will do very well, and even newspaper is not to be despised. Any kindergarten guide-book or manual will give directions for folding symmetrical figures and ordinary play articles, but, failing these, the childhood memories of almost any parent will furnish patterns for boxes, fly-traps, boats, baskets, stars, rosettes, cocked hats, etc. Folding is a valuable occupation, giving a wide knowledge of geometrical lines and planes, as well as practice in dexterity and accuracy; but

if these last are to be gained by its use, the papers must be accurately cut and folded as carefully. Triangles and circles are also used in the kindergarten, and the mother who experiments with these forms will no doubt be able to invent her own foldings from them. Large squares, folded in some pretty fashion, make a very effective border for the playroom, if fastened to the wall with thumb-tacks; and tiny ones, of gilt or colored paper, pressed very flat, may decorate home-made picture frames and fancy boxes.

The heavy brown wrapping-paper, known in America as "bogus paper," is admirable for making furniture for doll's houses, cutting and pasting according to some plan conceived by the mother or thought out by an older child. This, in connection with the heavy corrugated paper before-mentioned (the kind used for wrapping bottles), is quite stiff

enough, too, for a very satisfactory doll's house; so it is evident, for all these uses, that the provident mother must preserve every scrap of heavy and light paper, pasteboard, and cardboard that comes to the house, rejecting the ragged and broken portions and cutting the rest into suitable sizes for the store-closet.

Drawing is a universal occupation of the human race, and children take to it very early, without suggestion. The low blackboard with its white chalks (colored ones being used as rewards and incentives) is very useful here and greatly enjoyed, one exercise, much to be commended, being the making of large disks or plates with a circular sweep of the arm. Lead pencils and colored crayons may later be supplied, as well as some simple pencil sharpener, for the younger children, or squares of sandpaper, which will serve the purpose very well.

Any rough-surfaced paper, brown or white, will do for the young artists, the plain side of old wall paper being very useful. The paper should be carefully cut and pressed smooth before drawing begins, for no good purpose is ever served by allowing children to use untidy, ill-prepared materials in their work. They should have low tables, and chairs, too, appropriate to their size, or a board on trestles, and a stool. The babies at first enjoy making smaller disks like those on the blackboard, with the same movement of the pencil, and also tracing the outlines of their hands, and of simple pasteboard or wooden forms furnished for the purpose. Transparent slates, and stencil patterns to be followed on paper, are by no means to be despised either, for we are trying, by all these means, not to raise up great artists, but good and happy children, able for the most part to occupy themselves without assistance.

By and by they will enjoy free-hand drawing from leaves, fruit and flowers, domestic articles, and objects in the room. Here competitions are of great service, and the free-hand drawing may sometimes be used as a family game in the evening, the parents joining in the sport. Colored crayons are always delightful, of course, and free-hand brush-work, if water-color paints are to be had, should be begun as early as possible. Children have often been known to make their own paints, using berries, flowers, nuts, colored earths, etc., for the purpose, but these materials would so vary in different places that it would be useless to suggest them here. Coloring pictures, in books provided for the purpose, or in illustrated catalogues and magazines, is a universal enjoyment; and if different sized disks of cardboard cut in circles and ovals be provided, all little people delight in painting doll's dishes,

making decorative borders and designs on plates, saucers, and platters.

To supply a family of children with all the paper they need for their various occupations would require a small factory working at full steam; but since this is not to be had, and since they cannot, like Madam Wasp, manufacture their own, the only recourse is to preserve every scrap that comes to the house, if it be at all in hopeful condition, and to place the neighbors (if there are any and they happen to be childless) under requisition also. One of the strong points of the kindergarten, especially insisted upon by Froebel, is the careful and economical use of all materials; and if we do not allow children to waste what we provide, we shall commonly have enough for their wants. If we have not, they must wait until another supply is forthcoming; and such waiting, though somewhat painful, is often salutary.

As soon as children can handle a pair of blunt scissors, and that is very early, they enjoy cutting; and if they can do nothing else, can soon cut long pieces for fires, for rolled lamplighters, and later follow ruled lines and cut strips for chains. The kindergarten cutting is largely done on folded squares, triangles, and circles of the same size as those used for folding, and the children are subsequently guided to make a design with the pieces, it being understood that they must use all of them, and to paste the result in permanent form in a book or on cardboard. They cut traced objects also, and later on experiment with the scissors, cutting what they choose, often getting very good effects and producing recognizable objects. This free cutting cannot be done well, of course, until the first difficulty in handling the scissors is overcome, and until sharp points can safely be given; but the occu-

pation, even in its primary stages, is always charming to children, who delight in the glittering scissors, the rustle of paper, and the mastery over material which they quickly perceive is in their hands.

To provide objects for cutting, all magazines, newspapers, advertising cards, and tradesmen's catalogues with suitable pictures should be preserved and laid away in the store-closet, from which place of delight and mystery they can be produced when required. Careful cutting, according to individual ability, should be required, the scraps gathered up at the end of the play and the pictures put away in boxes. At another time, when a number of pictures has been accumulated, they can be sorted and arranged in envelopes according to kind and to the various uses for which they are destined.

Home-made scrap books are among the

most enjoyable gifts for babies or little invalids, and if neatly put together, sell well at a children's fair. Children enjoy making them on a few yards of white paper muslin cut into squares of convenient size. On these can be pasted the pretty pictures that have been cut out in the playroom. There are so many colored illustrations nowadays that gorgeous books may be evolved at small cost. The squares of muslin are sewed together and bound with cloth or silk, and being difficult to tear are just the thing for children too young to read, but old enough to look at pictures. A good paste is made of two heaping teaspoonfuls of flour mixed smoothly with a little cold water, then poured into half a large teacupful of boiling water and stirred quickly on the range until it bubbles.

Objects and figures from remnants of wall paper may also be cut out and make charming borders and decorations

for large scrapbooks, the space within to be filled with smaller objects. Helter-skelter pasting, with no idea whatever in the work, is of very little value, even when neatly done, and it is quite easy to accustom children from the first to arrange their books, or leaves of books, according to a plan. They may make books or charts of leaves, flowers, fruit, animals, children, toys, clothing, dishes, furniture, buildings, farm implements, men and women, of anything in fact that the enterprising advertiser issues in the form of pamphlets or entrusts to the periodicals. If a long lookout ahead is maintained by the older children they can often secure in various ways a series of historical pictures, which they can use chronologically in illustrating their lessons, and such a series is really of great value in impressing certain facts and dates.

An educational writer in one of our

periodicals lately suggested a "Nursery Art Exhibition," which provides a use for cuttings, and would undoubtedly be greatly enjoyed. Let each child select from a large stock of pictures previously cut, those which particularly appeal to his taste, and once a month, perhaps, let there be a grand display. Shawls, old curtains, or colored blankets may be hung up in different parts of the room, and each artist must have a special place for his exhibit, which is to be arranged according to his own taste. The parents may then be invited to view the pictures and to award the varying degrees of praise which may be needed.

Some gifted children of my acquaintance devised for themselves a unique system of decoration for their playroom, using each of the four walls for a different line of objects. There were the botanical, the zoölogical, the historical, and the Sunday walls.

On the botanical wall were dried ferns, mosses, lichens, fungi, autumn leaves and grasses, sprays of wheat and oats, corn and beans of different varieties arranged in patterns, nuts, burrs, rose-hips, black alderberries, etc., and in one corner colored pictures of all the fruits grown in the neighborhood, cut from seedsmen's catalogues.

On the zoölogical wall were butterflies, moths, and beetles, — only those found dead on their daily walks being used, — seashells, snakeskins, deserted birds' nests, with a picture of the bird to which they belonged fastened below; and above all these a frieze of free-hand sketches of all the wild animals they had seen in the woods and fields at different times. These sketches were fortunately labeled for the benefit of the occasional visitor, who else might have admired in the wrong place. The historical wall was really most interesting, the centre-

piece being an old engraving of Washington crossing the Delaware, which they had found in the attic and ingeniously framed in pine cones. The collection at the time I was admitted to see it, was devoted to American history, and it was marvelous to see how, by cutting figures, objects, and scenes from a variety of magazines, the young artists had combined them to illustrate famous events in our country's history.

On the Sunday wall the pictures were the finest and most expensive, a really good reproduction of the Sistine Madonna, furnished by the father of the family, serving as the chief point of attraction. The children had earned money themselves to buy large copies of Reynolds's Heads of Angels, Knaus's Holy Family, Murillo's St. John and the Lamb, and Adoration of the Shepherds, Memling's Singing Angels, and Plockhorst's Christ blessing Little Child-

ren, and these, it appeared, they exhibited two at a time on each side of the Sistine Madonna in unique frames the devoted father had arranged for the purpose. I append the directions for making these as they were given me. Take two pieces of picture moulding of the desired length and nail them to the wall parallel with each other and as far apart as the height of the picture they are intended to frame. Before nailing, place two small blocks behind the upper one to obtain sufficient space between it and the wall to slip in a suitable piece of glass. If desired, a piece of the moulding may be fitted at each end, thus making a more complete setting. Mouldings may be obtained at from nine cents per foot upwards, and thus a permanent frame, in which the pictures may be changed as often as desired, made at small cost.

On the Sunday wall, too, was arranged a large portfolio made by the children

themselves of heavy cardboard and cambric, and in this were a host of little blue prints from the old masters, all being on religious subjects. These were selected by the older children and given to the little ones to look over when they were studying their Sunday-school lessons.

Perhaps a word of warning should be given here, a word as to the kind of pictures admitted to the household, remembering if they be not really good ones, as far as subject is concerned, we are but deepening evil impressions by allowing the children not only to look at them, but to centre their attention upon them so far as to cut them out and paste them. Not all so-called "picture cards," sent out as advertisements, are fit for little people; and the Sunday paper — in America, at least — frequently offers "comic" pictures, in colors, over which children are allowed

to pore for hours and which are in execrable taste, bad in subject, worse in suggestion, low and vulgar in tone, and, in fact and altogether, fit only for the fire, which would probably turn blue with disgust as it shriveled them up.

Another kindergarten occupation, which again is a primitive industry of man, is weaving, and some form of it may be practiced in the nursery with home-made materials. An old slate frame, or wooden box cut down, may be converted into a loom, a row of nails being driven in at equal distances across one end, the warp fastened to these, and the woof drawn in and out with the fingers. The weaving materials (warp and woof) may be narrow strips of cloth, notched by the mother and torn by the children to the proper length and width; they may be cords, shoe laces, or grasses, if a sufficiently tough and pliable kind can be

found, and raffia, if to be had, is particularly useful.

Kindergarten weaving is done with colored papers and a long steel needle into which the weaving strip is fastened, and an ingenious child can often fashion a similar needle for himself from a wooden slat cut at one end to hold the piece of cloth. Children sometimes attain great proficiency with these rude looms and invent designs to suit themselves, according as they take up and put down with the woof one strip or two strips of the warp, or one and two strips alternately, etc., etc. The woven products when finished, the ends fastened and notched, or fringed, make very pretty mats, holders, or rugs for dolls' houses, and the occupation as a whole is one that develops considerable dexterity, accuracy, and knowledge of arithmetical processes.

There is a kind of slat weaving, too,

which is more difficult, but can be practiced by older children. The materials commonly used are tough, pliable wooden slats about a foot long and one third of an inch wide, and the family that has remnants of old slat curtains in the house, or peach baskets which can be cut up, will find them useful for this purpose. The slats are interwoven to produce designs, which will not hold together, by the way, unless at least four are used, and which may be used for picture frames, long borders for the blackboard, or picture card racks.

Raffia (an imported dried grass, very strong and pliable) has already been mentioned as a useful material for weaving, and its value is so great in children's work that a supply of it should be laid in, if at all possible. Most fancy-work, basketry, and kindergarten supply stores now keep it in stock, and a package of it can be easily posted, as

it is very light. Combined with straw it is used for basket-making, than which there is no better industry if the mother can give the first few lessons; but it is useful in a host of other ways, all of which are easily discovered by the children.

If any mother is so old-fashioned as to remember the art, there is great joy to small persons in knitting wools on four pins and a spool, the work, a long tubular cord, being afterwards made into reins or sewed into mats or tiny carpets.

Sewing, too, which used invariably to be taught to little girls, at least, but is now somewhat out of fashion, is commonly much enjoyed, particularly if its beginnings are practiced on scraps of bright-colored ribbons, cottons, and silk instead of on painfully long white seams. Lavender bags, candy bags, or scent bags of all shapes and sizes, made of odds and ends, are fascinating trifles

to begin with, as they are so soon finished; and then there is the fun in prospect of planning, cutting, fitting, and making real clothes for the doll, when fingers have grown a little more skillful.

And how about beadwork for small fingers? The "Second Gift" beads of the kindergarten (wooden balls, cubes and cylinders, colored and uncolored) are very useful for stringing, being of a comfortable size, pierced with holes large enough to admit a shoe lace, or a stout cord. They are rather expensive and cannot be made at home, unfortunately, but the old-fashioned glass beads of various colors, shapes, and sizes are cheap enough, and easily to be had. They are not so desirable for babies as the wooden beads, as they are too small for real safety and require needles and thread for stringing. Whatever beadwork the children do, however, let us provide an abundance of material, so

that the occupation may be really educative, allowing varying combinations of forms and colors.

When we speak of stringing beads we recall the delight children always feel in making necklaces, rings, and bracelets from whatever materials are at hand, and here their summer collections come in play for use in the winter playroom. Children of my acquaintance have used for stringing acorn-cups, thorn-apples, Indian corn of different colors, corn and cloves, corn and various seeds, chestnuts, shells, pods, bittersweet, acorns, smoke-balls, beans, beans and peas, squash seeds overlapping, squash seeds and cranberries, popcorn and cranberries, straws and peas, straws and beans, maple-wings and straws, horsetail reeds and peas, pine cones, and other objects too numerous to mention.

The twigs from their collections, notably the dry twigs of the pine tree from

which the needles have fallen away, can be used to make rustic furniture, fastening together with pins the pieces of different lengths. The bright pebbles are often much enjoyed if put in a wide-mouthed bottle and covered with water, in which they shine and shake in a fascinating way. If objects and simple pictures are drawn upon the table with chalk, even the very little child can follow their outline with seeds, — squash and melon seeds, sunflower, corn, beans, lentils, and coffee-berries being well adapted to the purpose.

And then there are the stick and pea plays, using soaked peas and slender, pointed sticks, which are an inexhaustible delight in the fashioning of mimic objects and the make-believe use of them. Almost anything can be made with these materials, the peas forming the points of connection between the wooden lines, a few objects suggested being sleds, hoes,

rakes, wheelbarrows, swords, tents, flags, houses, furniture, boats, even letters and figures, if desired. The stick and pea plays the child can engage in largely by himself, and they are really valuable, training the hand, educating the eye, exercising the judgment, and stirring the imagination.

Blowing soap bubbles is a particularly good play for a stormy day, if clean clay pipes are provided and the bubble mixture be made of Castile soap with the addition of a little glycerine to give a greater play of color. An exact recipe is the following: Put into a pint bottle two ounces of best Castile soap, cut into thin shavings, and fill the bottle with cold water which has been first boiled and then left to cool. Shake well together, and allow the bottle to stand until the upper part of the solution is clear. Decant now this clear solution of two parts, adding one part of glyce-

rine, and you will have an ideal soap-bubble mixture. With some practice, bubbles measuring eight or ten inches in diameter may be produced and a stand for them be provided by soaping the edge of a tumbler. If any old soft material is laid on the floor and the room divided into halves by a shawl or blanket hung across, the children may be arranged in two opposing camps and have a very good match game, devising their own rules as to size and number of bubbles, whether they shall be kept in the air by fanning, how much it shall count if a bubble falls or strays across the line, etc., etc.

Building, one of the prominent kindergarten employments, is as useful indoors as out, of course, either with small blocks at the low tables or with large ones and sticks of wood upon the floor. In some German kindergartens a quantity of large building logs is sup-

plied, a foot or more in length, three inches wide, and one inch thick. These are kept neatly piled, and if the playroom is large enough would be an invaluable resource for indoor occupation. With these, and any smaller blocks, if a sufficient quantity be provided, the child can work out his own ideas, can build objects from stories, and enjoy the free, untrammeled use of indestructible materials. The "Anchor Blocks" are particularly useful in the playroom, as they are of stone, are washable, made in three colors, and each box is somewhat more complicated than the one that preceded it.

If a large doll's house be provided for the playroom, never-ceasing delight will be found by the children in furnishing and fitting it in common. Such a house may be only a rough packing-case with a shelf, insuring a bedroom floor, or, according to the leisure and ability of the father, it may be prettily finished with

roof, windows, halls, and doorways. No elaborate finishing is necessary, however; imagination will supply all deficiencies, and the simple furniture, changed from time to time, as hands grow more skillful, will come by and by to be wonderfully ingenious and elaborate. Children may be encouraged now and then to fit up a small house of their own, which can be very well made from a card-board box and which furnishes a suitable present for an invalid child-friend. Pebbles or sand may be glued to the outside of the box, if desired, to make it look like stone, and the furnishings may all be of spools, boxes, and paper. A match box may serve as a cradle with paper rockers, a larger box be cut into a bed with furnishings of lace paper, a tiny spool make a candlestick, a round pill-box a clock with face drawn in, and, finally, home-made paper dolls may occupy the seats of honor.

And yet the tale of indoor play is not completed, for there is gardening of a sort to be done with potatoes, carrots, and parsnips hollowed out, and with ferneries, window-boxes, and pans of earth where seeds are planted.

There are household pets to be cared for also, for if one may ever state a general truth applying to all children, a safe one to venture would be that they have, without exception, a passion for animals. Every child lover and child student knows this fact, and early in his wonderful book, the "Mother-Play," Froebel provided games for the development and gratification of the feeling.

By the clustering hop-vine in one of the first pictures the mother stands, the infant on her arm, and she beckons to the chickens clustering at her feet. "Call them, sweet one!" coaxes the mother. "They will come; they love my babykin." Again she is seated with the child

under the spreading elm tree, the pigeons fluttering near, and as she sees the little one's eyes brighten with pleasure in their movements, for "life attracts life," she flutters her fingers like white doves, and softly calling "Coo! Coo!" woos the birds to come nearer.

There are other animal songs and symbolic pictures in this unique book for mothers, — songs about fishes, about birds' nests, about humble friends of the barnyard; and in each one the baby is led to imitate their activities, for in imitating he begins to understand. In the kindergarten the animal plays are continued and developed, and now the child is a father bird winging through grove and meadow to find food for his nestlings; now a mother lizard basking, with her little ones, in the sun; now a pony, now a lambkin, now a gray goose leading the flock, and again a squirrel gathering nuts for winter. So he grows into

sympathy with all dumb creatures, and learns something of their dependence upon him and his responsibility for their comfort and welfare.

Froebel has much to say in some of his other books of the value to the child of companionship with living things, and of the benefits which he may gain by the care of his pets. Dr. E. E. Hale, in speaking upon one occasion to the friends of the Animal Rescue League, put in a plea for pets among city children. It has been said, for instance, that persons who live in cities are less humane than those who live in the country, because the former are unused to having animals about them. Dr. Hale questioned fifty Sunday-school children about their pets. Three had cats, only one had a dog, and not a single child had a canary bird. "Now, that is the result of putting up sixteen-story tenement houses," said the good doctor, "and then you ask minis-

ters to look out for the morals in these families! I should be glad if every schoolroom in Boston had its pet dog or cat or rabbit. The children would be trained in kindness to weaker beings, and so be led to regard one another more sympathetically, more tenderly, and grow up to be better-hearted men and women."

It is surprising how little the pupils of our metropolitan public schools know of even so common an animal as a cow, and because of this and similar ignorance how much of our teaching misses its aim. In view of this fact a noted scientist has lately suggested establishing homes for domestic animals near every large town, where children could go and make the acquaintance of their useful friends in their own comfortable and appropriate surroundings. The benefit of studying animals in their habit as they live, has already been shown in the intelligent and satisfactory work done by the Wash-

ington school-children in the Zoölogical Gardens of the capital, where the beasts, wild and tame, are given all freedom possible in captivity, and where they repay careful study, since the natural conditions under which they live make them comparatively free and unconstrained.

To look at and study animals, however, is not enough, save, perhaps, for scientific purposes; we must enter into some closer relationship with them before we can really know and love them.

A longing for pets is strong in the heart of every child, and it is one of the most unfortunate features of modern city life, as Dr. Hale intimates, that so many young things are cut off from the gratification of so purely normal and beneficial a desire. Everywhere, in all lands, savage, barbarous, and civilized, children yearn for something alive which shall be their very own, and they are, commonly, quite willing to make friends

with any animal, whatever it may be. Florentine babies guard carefully the wire cage that holds a chirping cricket, the little ones of Japan delight in their captive fireflies that flash their lights through boxes of plaited grass, the tiny fur-clad Esquimau rolls about on the floor of his *igloo* with a bear-cub, the African child frolics with his parrot, the East-Indian with his mongoose, and our own little people are never so happy as with their white mice, their rabbits, doves, guinea pigs, cats, dogs, and canaries. These are the ordinary pets, the pets of sophistication, but their proud owners would by no means confine themselves to these were they allowed a broader range. Turtles seem to have an uncommon fascination for country children, — for all children, in fact, — and they are not at all difficult to tame, will eat from the hand, and answer to their names; toads and frogs are not as unre-

sponsive as they appear, apparently live in great happiness in any appropriate house devised for them, and learn to snap fearlessly at flies held before their bright, black eyes. Children frequently take pleasure also in the care and friendly observation of snails, earwigs, and beetles, and among the larger animals, pigs, domestic fowls, lambs, colts, and calves are often made into fairly satisfactory playmates.

Of course, the parent, who watches with interested eyes the fraternizing of his boy or girl with the animals of wood and field, has a certain duty laid upon him, that of seeing that the creature in question is well cared for, according to his peculiar needs, and that he is not made unhappy by the restraint or captivity in which he is kept. No child has a right to make his "little brother" wretched to gratify his own pleasure, and the sooner he learns this the better.

The same thing is true of animals accustomed to and ordinarily kept in captivity, and any neglect of duty shown by the small owner in caring for them should be visited by the natural and inevitable consequence, that of losing them. If the parent tends the pet creature himself he is depriving the child of the chief benefits of its ownership, that of a real sense of responsibility and a practical knowledge of the relation between love and nurture. No normal child would willingly hurt his pet, but if sufficiently thoughtless and careless he might neglect it, and even one instance of suffering inflicted by such neglect should result in the liberation of the wild creature, or the return of the tame one to the shop whence it came. The child cannot learn to be a "little brother to the whole great world" by willfully hurting the smallest animal that crawls, and if he forgets the needs of a living thing whose earthly Provi-

dence he is, he should be deprived of it until he shows an altered mind.

There are those who contend that it is cruel to keep any creature in captivity, and that to give the child goldfish or canaries, for instance, is to "intrench ourselves behind a custom of the dark ages when all things suffered that the senses might be delighted." This argument, however, seems an overstrained one, and if pursued to its logical end would prove it equally cruel for man to make any use of animal life, whether for pleasure, profit, or sustenance, since every creature that exists has a right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

We are not prepared to controvert this axiom, but until the world reaches a point where it can be carried out as a working theory, we may assure ourselves that we are at least doing no harm when we give our children pets whose ances-

tors as well as themselves have been born in captivity.

A comparatively harmless way for children to keep one kind of pets in durance is to allow them to make and stock an aquarium. If they are old enough to use tools, detailed plans for making one of wood and glass may be found in Jackman's "Nature Study"; if a small, simple aquarium will serve the purpose, a glass candy jar or butter jar will do, though it must have a wide mouth so as to give the animals sufficient air. The great thing to remember in establishing one of these water homes is that there must be a certain balance between plant and animal life, for each needs the other if we would have them grow and thrive. There must be two inches or so of clean, well-washed sand on the bottom of the glass jar, box, or globe, a few stones or pebbles to make it look more natural, and then water plants should be set out and

weighted a little to keep them in place. Eel-grass, water-cress, parrot's feather, duck-weed, are all suitable, or almost any plant which grows in or on the margin of a pond. The water, preferably rain water, or brought from a clean pond, must be poured in slowly and with great care and is not to be changed, except in case of accident, but only replenished occasionally to supply evaporation. A north window is best for an aquarium, which needs light but little sunshine, and must not be kept too warm. A few snails and tadpoles to consume the decaying vegetation are very useful, and when their new home is set in its place, from which, by the way, it should seldom be moved, and the water has been allowed two or three days to clear and to become thoroughly aerated, the fish may be invited to move in. It is best to begin with goldfish, as they are hardy, and add afterwards small minnows,

dace, and a few water insects, as the boat-fly and the margined beetle. All these the children can collect with a net or a long-handled dipper, but they must not be too ardent collectors and thus overstock the aquarium.

Prepared fish-food, cracker crumbs, and, once or twice a week, the least possible quantity of scraped beef may be fed to the scaly pets, though the child will be much more likely to overfeed than to scant them and will need guidance on this point, as well as in removing particles of food that have not been consumed.

Those who cannot tolerate the idea of a caged bird in the house would, of course, have no objection to allowing their children to keep pigeons, and no one could disapprove of feeding and taming the wild birds.

Great numbers of fledglings are somewhat too precipitate every year in leaving their nests and tumble down into the

world before their wings are strong enough to escape if a cat espies them. Our "little brothers of the world" should be taught to look out for such cases and to protect and feed the weaklings until they are self-supporting. Many birds would stay with us much longer, perhaps even through the entire year, if they were fed during the winter and if shelters and houses were provided for them. There would be little complaint of stolen eggs and nests and stoned birds, if children were taught to regard the lovely feathered creatures as their special pets and charges, dependent upon them for care and shelter.

The subject of modeling in clay has not been touched upon as yet, and this well deserves a chapter by itself. If any clay fit for moulding be accessible, — that from which drain-pipes are made will do very well, — a quantity of it may be mixed in an old pail or tub, to

about the consistency of dough, and, if kept covered with a wet cloth and occasionally stirred about, will keep indefinitely. If a low table be covered with oilcloth for the work and an apron be put on, neither room nor clothing will suffer from the clay, which indeed quickly dries into a powder and can be brushed away. If the child is to model by mother's side, the clay may be given in a tray, and the veriest baby will long be quiet if he is shown how to roll balls or eggs or marbles from the plastic substance. Older children may model nuts, fruits, animals, furniture, dishes, or can make plaques of different shapes and sizes on which leaves may be impressed, while blocks or rings or disks may be stamped in as borders. A good piece of work may be fired in a slow oven, and the plaques or marbles or balls may subsequently be painted according to fancy. If clay is not to be had, Plasticine, an

inexpensive modeling substance made in four colors, may be procured at any kindergarten supply store.

Last to be mentioned, but perhaps first in its ever-fresh delight, is play in the sand, which is as practical in a small way indoors, as out. In a small playroom a large sand-box is impossible, but an arrangement may be made by using a zinc trough set in a light box, after the fashion of a window-box for flowers, and fastened to a small table, before which a child will sit for an hour at a time, filling and refilling various little shapes, small flower-pots, "patty-pans," and the like, and turning them out on the board of a high chair.

If there is sufficient space every playroom should be provided with a kindergarten sand-table, which is merely a water-tight box painted and varnished inside, five feet long, four wide, and a foot deep, perhaps, set on legs, and filled

with sand. This is large enough for five or six children to gather around and learn to work in common, and may be provided with a smooth wooden cover and serve as a table when necessary. After going through the early plays, such as covering and uncovering the hands, which naturally occur to the children, give them sticks, as rulers and butter-paddles, to flatten and divide with, and tiny gardening-tools to lay out beds and flower-gardens. Miniature trees, shrubs, and flowers may be set out in these gardens, and the paths made of pebbles, the fences of sticks and slats. At another time leaves, twigs, tiles, and blocks may be impressed upon the smoothed surface in designs and borders, and finally, whole scenes in town and country life may be depicted and many of the other play-materials be brought in for illustration.

IV

STORIES, GAMES, AND SONGS

No mother, however remote from metropolitan advantages she may be, but can sing with her children, and Froebel, who believed that the plays of the infant are preparations for the experiences of maturity, would have the mother sing to her child from the beginning. Although the baby is yet, or seems to be, unconscious, says the great teacher, his ear is open, and as he grows older the singer must continue the practice until the child can join his voice to hers.

One of the most interesting games Froebel outlines in the "Mother Play" is "The Finger Piano." The fingers of the mother's left hand, and later on the child's, are held horizontally to represent the ivory keys and are slightly bent at

the middle joint to give a certain elasticity. The right hand then plays upon them, pressing them down in turn, and the melodies, simple combinations of the five notes, are accompanied with equally simple words: —

"Listen, baby dear,
The lovely music hear;
Little fingers downward go —
Hark! the answer, sweet and low:
La-la-la," etc.

Froebel adds in the motto for the mother, as an explanation of the child's joy in the game: —

"For a something in his heart
Answers to your simple art;
And like silent bells set ringing,
Makes the little song you're singing
Seem of him a part."

This is the great educator's invariable desire, to trace the connection between outward manifestation and inward feeling, and he would have all music an expression of the harmony within the soul.

There can be no question that the baby's ear can be trained from the beginning by listening to the mother's song, and this cultivation, as indicated in the words of "The Finger Piano," may be extended by hearkening to the sounds of the outside world. The mother has this idea unconsciously in mind when she bids the child listen to the duck or the dog or the bird, and asks him what each one says; when she calls his attention to the puff of engines, the churning of paddle-wheels, and the throb of machinery. If she would extend these listening exercises to all the sounds about the child, leading him, as a daily play, to tell her how many different noises he can hear around him and what they are, she would be giving him that "concrete tone experience which should precede general musical training." As a writer on kindergarten music has lately said, "The child to whom everything 'sings,' from the whirr

of the passing street-car to the crackling flames, will never need to have the mysteries of musical interpretation explained to him."

The so-called unmusical person is not such because of any fundamental lack of power or deficiency in the tone area, but, commonly, because he has never been led to take any interest in musical sounds, has never been surrounded with a musical atmosphere. Every child loves to sing, and even if his ear for music be quite undeveloped, will cheerfully growl along on a monotone, if not unduly criticised, until some day the tone world begins to open to him. We who have been much with little ones in the kindergarten know that tone-deafness is by no means incurable if only remedies be early applied; and if we would not have our children "fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils, the motions of their spirits dull as night," we should

give them musical training from the very beginning of life.

When the baby is old enough to begin singing himself, all Froebel's finger-songs ("The Weather Cock," "Pat-a-Cake," "Tick-Tack," "Thumb-a-Plum," "The Family," "The Pigeon House," etc.) enter appropriately, and there are many similar treasures to be drawn upon, not only in the "Mother Play" but in modern collections based on the kindergarten ideas.

These form an introduction to the art of singing, and by and by, if the training is continued, we shall have little choristers who can sing really well and with sympathy and understanding. We shall find examples of those songs which Goethe advised to cadence the soul, — songs of home, nature, religion, and love, — in all the kindergarten music-books, and though all are not of equal value, all show a certain understanding of child-

nature and are reasonably sure to please the little people for whom they are written.

We must remember, however, in our vocal work that children cannot sing too long at one time without injury to the voice, five minutes being as much as is safe, according to some particularly cautious authorities. We must insist also upon the use of a soft tone in singing, since "it is the flower of the voice and not its weeds" which is to be developed. A high voice, too, is to be encouraged, because the root of vocal trouble in children is generally considered to come from over-use of the lower notes.

The songs we select for our juvenile choir must have a suitable compass, for injury to the voice is inflicted by the effort to sing notes which are too high or too low. D below the treble staff to the D an octave above is always a safe compass, though, of course, there are

some children who can easily take notes higher and lower than these.

And then as to the melodies, which, as a general thing, should be complete in themselves, that is, not dependent on an accompaniment, though possibly improved by it. It is obvious, too, that they should not contain difficult intervals, passages requiring careful phrasing, nor many accidentals; and if it is objected that it is not easy to write a melody when excursions into these flowery paths are forbidden, we can only answer that music can be made on one string of a violin if a master hold the instrument.

As to the words, they should be sweet, which does not mean, as some song-writers for children seem to suppose, that they should be merely silly jingles. Mother Goose songs, however, are not to be understood as deserving this description, for they are classics and well worth singing in the nursery. No matter how

simple the words may be, — and, by the way, they should not only be sweet and childlike, but easy to sing, — they must be taught carefully and filled in with all necessary explanations. We can never have true, heartfelt singing if our pupils are pouring forth unmeaning syllables, if they are warbling patriotically, as did not long ago the children of a certain public school, —

> "I love thy rots and chills,
> Thy woods and temper pills,
> My heart with ratcher thrills," etc., etc.

Songs which are too difficult for little people to sing are, fortunately, by no means too difficult for them to hear, and this branch of their musical education is not to be neglected. They thoroughly enjoy instrumental music, also, if sufficiently "tunable" and not too complicated; and as we look up from the piano at the eager listeners beside us we think involuntarily of those "young-eyed cher-

ubim" to whom the heavenly orbs still quire as they move.

The mother who can afford to buy a few of the music-books used in the kindergartens will find in them countless suggestions for games as well as songs. There are the finger-plays already mentioned, all kinds of games with a ball, sense games, guessing games (so-called), and a host of charming ring-plays representing the trades and occupations of man and the life and movements of animals. Froebel believed in the exercise and development of the child's senses from the beginning of life, contending that we only half use the powers at our command because they are dulled and blunted from lack of training. All kindergarten music-books contain a variety of little games intended to cultivate the senses of smell, taste, touch, sight, and hearing, and if the mother can neither sing nor play the music to which

they are set she can at least teach the children the words that accompany them.

Children would naturally play with balls without suggestion, but there are numberless schemes for systematized games with them in the kindergarten music-books, and all are accompanied by attractive airs, and simple words which refine the play and guard it against rudeness and disorder. On gala afternoons in the playroom, when older people have time to be present, there are many other games in which children delight and which are an education in themselves, such as "Russian Scandal," "What is my Thought Like?" "Twenty Questions," "Genteel Lady," and "Dumb Crambo." Tableaux, either literary, historical, or poses after famous pictures, are eagerly taken up by children, and so are charades, pantomimes, dramatizations of historical episodes or of favorite stories.

And here, as a closing thought in this little book of suggestions to lonely mothers, to women as isolated as Robinson Crusoe's wife would have been, had he been so fortunate as to possess one, comes the subject of story-telling.

In Björnson's charming narrative, "A Happy Boy," little Oyvind longs to know what everything is saying in the world about him. What do the leaves say as they rustle, he asks, what the brook as it ripples along, what the birds as they carol, what the clouds as they float, and the winds as they blow?

Then his mother sits down by his side and with her rhymes and stories interprets to him the speech of all things, down to the ant that crawls in the moss and the worm that works in the bark, and happy little Oyvind looks at them all and feels that he has never really seen them before.

This is the recital of no unusual ex-

perience, for Oyvind's longing comes to every child, though every woman, alas! is not so well fitted to satisfy them as the sweet Norwegian mother of the tale. The little one comes to a world where everything is strange and new, and if no one serves as interpreter for all its wonders his ceaseless questioning is crushed back upon itself and finally dies away, leaving a dull, vacuous, unimaginative mind behind it.

Among the exceptional educational advantages which Goethe enjoyed, a great critic ranks as most fruitful his mother's genius for story-telling; and those of us who have seen the passionate response of the vigorous child mind to the appropriate tale or recital will agree in the opinion.

The child's introduction to literature is really given far back in his baby days, with his mother's song as she cradled him in her arms. Neither the words nor

the ideas that they convey then appeal to him, of course, but the poetic form, or rather the rhythm, the recurrence of measured accent. Emerson says, "Music and rhyme are among the earliest pleasures of the child, and in the history of literature poetry precedes prose;" and though the majority of women have never either formulated the saying for themselves or read the printed words, yet they have taken advantage of the fact, serenely working by the light of their intuitions. To the peculiar power of poetry, the soothing, almost mesmeric charm of its pulsation, of its rhythmic flow, the child is very sensitive, and little ones who are mentally deficient may sometimes be reached by the music of verse when nothing else avails to enchain their wandering attention. All the spells in the old fairy tales, you remember, are cast in poetic form, and without the aid of rhythm, metre, rhyme, and allitera-

tion, we feel instinctively that the enchanted frog could never assume his rightful shape, nor the white doe come at the call of the distressed princess.

So when we croon nursery songs and Mother Goose verses to our babies, and when we recite to them simple rhymes and jingles, we do well, and we only do ill when as they grow older and are fitted for higher poetic enjoyment we make no effort to furnish it. There are not many collections of poetry for children, not many, that is, that are really appropriate and essentially childlike, but a large stock of verses is not necessary, and some of the best poets on your library shelves would gladly show you, if you would entreat them, that even they have not disdained to sing to the little ones now and then.

The earliest literature given to children, whether poetry or prose, should be told in story form and never read. The

child desires to look as he listens in order that he may understand, and the printed page seems to interpose a barrier to the gratification of that desire. Dr. Stanley Hall, in his pamphlet on "The Early Sense of Self," notes this characteristic of childhood, saying, "The eye seems to be one of the very first media along with touch through which the child comes into *rapport* with the parent: even older children always gaze at the eye rather than the mouth of others and take at first far more meaning from it than they gather from words."

But this art of story-telling is by no means an easy one to acquire unless one be a natural *raconteur*, for, as Froebel says, "the story-teller must take life into himself in its wholeness, must let it live and work whole and free within him. He must give it out free and unabbreviated, and yet stand above the life which actually is." Therefore, he goes on to

say, the man who is engrossed with the affairs of the world is commonly unable to throw himself into the exercise and make it successful; it is the mother who lives only in and with her child, knowing no care but that of fostering his existence, who best can please him, or the brother and sister a little older, or the grandparents, who look on life from a higher standpoint, still stirred by its movement and yet above the rush of the flood.

The value of story-telling is appreciated in the kindergarten, and in kindergarten training-schools a definite effort is made to teach the art; an effort which at least results in giving to the pupil a clear appreciation of its importance as an introduction to literature, of its bearing upon the development of imagination, of its service in ethical teaching, of its uses as a means of vocal training and of training in language, and of its worth

incidentally as a vehicle of information.

When we consider the various ends which story-telling may be made to serve, we appreciate that it is one of the most potent influences which affect the child during his early years, and that therefore it behooves us to select wisely the literary material which we provide for him. Most little children are interested in fairy stories, and in spite of the battles continually waged against them, it is to be hoped that the simple, healthy interest will continue, for they undoubtedly satisfy a want in the youthful mind which no other form of narrative can supply. The age-old fairy tales, with the myths from which they developed, are appropriate to childhood, because they took their rise in a childlike, fanciful period of the world. They see things and relate them in a youthful way, concern themselves with matters which are of surpass-

ing moment to any right-minded infant, and trip gayly with a wave of the hand over such dull affairs as science, politics, war, death, and religion.

Not only myths and fairy tales, but fables also, have their use in early mental training, though here we must avoid those which are too highly flavored with Orientalism, and teach, as Dr. Felix Adler says, "servility, subservience, and cunning."

And when the children have outgrown babyhood, there are the wonder-tales of science waiting to be told, and each one of them, if given aright, will waken in the little one a tender reverence for everything that lives and grows about him and a worship for the wise God who has made and loves them all. Every season simple, scientific books are published which are veritable mines of stories, but if one wishes a series already prepared he can find nothing better for the pur-

pose than "Mother Nature's Children," "Mother Nature's Rules," and "Mother Nature's Lessons." [1]

Stories from history must not be forgotten when the children are older and can begin to appreciate with some degree of intelligence the relation of the event to others which have preceded and followed it; and here enters our opportunity for hero-tales, which young people of a certain age, and especially boys, so unceasingly demand. It is the God-given hunger for an ideal that is gnawing at their hearts, and let us beware how we satisfy it with anything less than the highest within our reach.

There is a wide range of subjects from which the story-teller may make his repertory, — myths, fairy tales, fables, science stories, and incidents from history, — but he must add to it a goodly store of verse, and he may not neglect

[1] By Allen Walton Gould.

anecdotes of animals, narratives of other children, and those personal experiences, beginning with "When I was a little girl," or "a little boy," as the case may be, which never fail to draw the hearer from his play and bring him, wide-eyed with interest, to listen.

We need not confine ourselves in telling stories to children nor in reading them either, when that time comes, to those which they altogether understand. It is better to be above their level than below it, and to meet now and then with a half-understood word or idea in a tale is but to pique the fancy with hints of further beauty out of sight. An English critic, in writing upon the values of the reading habit, says: "It is rare for boys to go to school possessing anything that can be really called knowledge, but those who do have it invariably obtained it by miscellaneous reading in books which they only half comprehended."

It is possible, too, that we make a mistake in restricting ourselves in our story-telling too exclusively to glad tales, tales of laughter and sunshine. These are undoubtedly proper for the babies, whose sensibilities are far too delicate to be trifled with; but to touch an older child sometimes to strongest compassion and sympathy, even to tears, is not without its value, and is positively beneficial occasionally to a dull or unimaginative little person. Tears that fall upon the heart are sometimes cooling and refreshing. It is with them as with the drops of rain that E. R. Sill sings of in "An Ancient Error" —

"Taste the sweet drops, — no tang of brine;
Feel them, — they do not burn
The daisy-buds, whereon they shine,
Laugh, and to blossoms turn."

In telling such stories, however, it need hardly be said that we should be most delicate in selection, touching upon

no subject inappropriate to childhood and never leaving the hero in a hopeless position at the end. It is essential that a story for little children should "turn out well," as the saying is; for to leave the hearers in misery as to the fate of one whom they have learned to love is to trouble sleep and to tamper with the working of delicate brains.

It has been already suggested that the telling of stories has an ethical bearing, and that it has to do with life. Not only by giving a taste for good literature in youth do we provide the child with one of the greatest sources of pleasure and profit in maturity and secure him against the thousand ills which come from the reading of evil books, but we open the way for the working of that main function of literature, which is "to develop in the people right tastes, right admirations, right appreciations, and right aspirations."

These few chapters of this little book contain but a handful only of the many hints which might be given for children's work and play in the home, and all of them, although not distinctly belonging to the kindergarten, are yet based on kindergarten principles. Though by no means exhaustive, they have been written with the object of furnishing wholesome and delightful occupation for the child, occupation which he can carry on largely by himself, except in the earlier stages, and which will lead in some measure to his development as a reasonable human being, able to work in coöperation with his fellows and to take his place as a factor in the world's progress.

THE END

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